

CHARACTER-BUILDING

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BY
EDWARD A. HORTON



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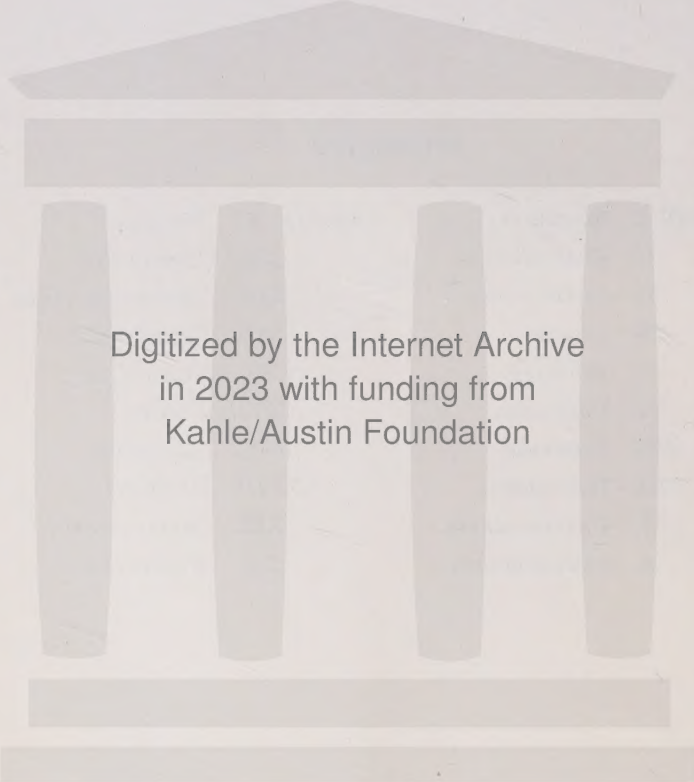
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PREFACE.

There can be nothing more important, after implanting religious belief, than the securing of character. The first is the seed, and the second is the fruitage. This book presents for practical working purposes, in the Sunday School, lessons on leading traits of Christian manhood and womanhood. Various sources are drawn upon to give variety and to enrich the teacher's material. It will be seen that the Bible has been sought for helpful passages and illustrative characters, while from the array of historical examples many illustrious instances have been cited. Added to all this are the poetical quotations, which sometimes embody a lesson in themselves.

One suggestion may be of value in helping a Sunday School to the best use of this manual. If it is deemed inadvisable to give twenty or more Sundays to such a continuous line of character subjects, some other course could be made to alternate, thus escaping any possible monotony and covering the entire Sunday-School year of forty Sundays. But this is only offered as a casual hint, and may not be needed.

I earnestly advise teachers to arouse the minds of scholars to a personal participation in developing these lessons. The subjects relate to actual life; and it ought to be possible for any teacher to secure opinions, short papers, and animated discussion in any class with regard to these traits and how they work out in human life. Young people have many thoughts on these practical subjects, which they would be glad to offer, where in the consideration of abstract subjects they would often be silent. By all means make your scholars partners with you in the treatment of these lessons.

EDWARD A. HORTON.

LESSON I.

SINCERITY.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Matthew, Chapter XXIII, Verses 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous.

Oh, who before the righteous God
Shall uncondemned appear?
The man whose soul abides with truth,
In deed and thought sincere.

Psalm xv.

I. BIBLE EXAMPLE: PETER.

We are beginning the lessons that belong to Character-building, and we may well take first the subject of Sincerity. This is the head-source of many other Christian virtues, and is the one trait necessary to a strong character. Without sincerity there is no hope of building a noble life: the foundations will be lacking.

You may be surprised to see that we select Peter as an example of sincerity. He was full of impulses,—always quick, and apt to do the wrong thing. Turn to Luke xxii., and read the account given there of his actions, in verses from 54 to 63. In the garden, when Jesus was arrested, Peter drew his sword and wanted to fight. But Jesus called him the Rock, and loved him. How can we call him sincere when he seemed to change, and was not true every time?

Peter was honest at heart, loyal to Jesus, and meant to do right. When he did wrong, he repented. His feelings were very strong: they sometimes carried him away. But, as the needle in the compass will often swing away from the north when disturbed, it comes back again, and points correctly to the pole. So it was with this disciple of the Master. He was too honest and true to deceive. He was no hypocrite, cool and calculating.

II. HISTORICAL EXAMPLE: MARTIN LUTHER.

There are many examples of sincere men in history; and, when we read their lives, they always make us better and braver. One of these was Martin Luther, the great reformer. We have not space to tell you here what he did, how frank he was, how true to conscience, and what he suffered. Your teacher will give you some parts of the story of his grand work in starting the Reformation. We can learn more sometimes by biography than in any other way. Luther was quick of temper and headstrong, like Peter; but he was in earnest and sincere. Luther was indignant because there was so much make-believe in the churches; and he gave his life to the people, to help them to be free from the slavery of superstition and insincerity.

III. THE WORDS OF JESUS.

At the beginning of our lesson are some words of Jesus that have a stern tone. We think of him as speaking in love. It was in love that he spoke against hypocrites and deceivers. Jesus loved the truth so much that he could not bear to see these men going about, blinding the people, telling lies, and concealing God's goodness.

SINCERITY.

If you will read what Jesus said everywhere, you will find that he never used such strong language against anybody but hypocrites, or make-believes. No words seemed too strong to utter, when he was rebuking this class of men. Even when Jesus was crucified, he said, "Father, forgive them: they know not what they do." Insincerity was something Jesus denounced everywhere and at all times.

IV. WHAT IS SINCERITY?

After thinking over the lives of Peter and Luther and reading what Jesus said against the insincere, what is there to take away for every-day life? The part that young people and older ones must fill in the world?

1. You must see that Jesus does not ask what is impossible. Peter was wrong sometimes. So are we. Luther made mistakes. So do we. Jesus only required that the aim of life be true, that each one try to be open, honest, manly. More than that cannot be expected from any one.

2. A sincere character is always reliable. You would not think so of Peter, and yet Jesus called him Rock. Because he could be depended on, at the last, and was sure to come out right. We have said this before in the lesson, but it needs repeating. An insincere character is always agreeing to this, and saying "yes" to that; and for a while you think he is splendidly reliable, he stands by you on everything. But he does the same with others.

3. Therefore, you must not expect from a sincere friend a readiness to agree with everything you plan. He may oppose you. That is because he is your true friend. Be wise and big-hearted and cherish such a friend. Some public men, who want office or favors, will smile on every one: others, who are the true leaders, will speak out their convictions.

4. Sincerity is like a climate. Weather changes, but climate stays about the same. There are persons of weather and persons of climate: the first are insincere, the others are sincere. If we are sincere, then all other traits of character become strong and beautiful. Where truthfulness and honesty and manliness are lacking, you cannot hope for much.

5. Sincerity is happiness. It gives one a clear conscience. He who has this quality is not afraid, has nothing to cover up, goes forward bravely,—yes, cheerfully.

V. CLASS TALKS.

Against whom did Jesus speak so strongly? Did he ever talk that way about other people? Can you describe Peter? Did he ever do the wrong thing? Who was Martin Luther? Can you mention any fact in his life that shows sincerity? Why is sincerity so important? What depends on it? Is it hard to be sincere always? Are there times when we must use tact? What do you mean by "tact" and "policy"? Is sincerity necessarily rudeness?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. The Bible Passage.
- II. The Bible Example.
- III. Historical Example.
- IV. Right Use of Sincerity.
- V. Its Need in our Day.

VII. TO TEACHERS.

Teachers must equip themselves with a few culled books bearing on life, character, and duty, such as Kramer's "The Right Road," Moodie's "Tools for Teachers," Smiles's series on "Self-help and Character," and any similar publications. Often the illustrating and enforcing of the lessons in this course must be done by material from personal observation, chance events, and suggestions of pupils. Draw out the members of the class to tell their own experience, and bring home the subject by discussions.

LESSON II.

PEACEMAKING.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Isaiah, Chapter II, Verses 2, 3, 4.

And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge between the nations, and shall reprove many peoples: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

I hear once more the voice of Christ say, "Peace!"

Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals
The blast of War's great organ shakes the skies!
But, beautiful as songs of the immortals,
The holy melodies of love arise.

Longfellow.

I. OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE: ABRAM.

Out of the dim, long-ago past we have the story of Abram and Lot. You will find it in Genesis, Chapter XIII, Verses 5 to 13. Here was a case of the peace spirit. Abram had many herds and a large tribe of people. So had Lot. They could not live together. There was trouble, and quarrels arose. So, instead of holding on and continuing the disputes, Abram said: "Let us separate. If you go away to the right, I will take the left: if you choose the left, then I will depart with my flocks and men to the right. Just as you please, but let us have peace." And in that way bloodshed and strife were avoided. There seemed to be room enough for both. And Abram had no disposition to stand on his rights or to show bad feelings. Abram was a peacemaker. Not everything can be settled so harmoniously; but the story is a beautiful one, and shines out of a dark, quarrelsome age of the world.

II. WILLIAM PENN.

It was in the early days of this Republic that a man, a Quaker, came to this New World, and acted toward the Indians with the same spirit that Abram had. He talked with the savages, and tried to be fair and kind in his dealings. You can easily find his life, told in many books; and I hope you will read something about him. As in the story of Abram, we know it is not always possible to act as Penn did; but we admire his spirit, his sense of justice, his love of fair play. The gospel of Jesus is one of peace and good will; and, in building character, we must seek earnestly to follow the peacemaking rule of life.

III. THE IDEAL.

What is an "ideal"? Something we hold up as the right object of our lives. Call it a "dream," a "vision," a "hope." It is the perfect picture; and, as we look at it, our lives grow toward it. Young people have ideals, in the school life, as they read of great men. Jesus always held up ideals. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." And in the verses from the book of Isaiah, at the head of this lesson, how splendidly the perfect picture is painted of a time to come, when peace among nations will exist!

IV. WHERE IT BEGINS.

But we must stop and think. How is all this great peace in the wide world to be brought about? We may make laws; but, if people will not carry them out, of what good are they? Why, this peace-making must begin at home,—in you and in me, in boys and girls, and in separate persons. Yes, every one must try to practise the Golden Rule; and then all the small streams will make a great river.

V. PEACEMAKERS.

1. He is a peacemaker who is slow to be angry. Abram might have done quite differently. He might have had counsel of pride, and said to Lot: "Do as you please: I am here. If you do not like it, I am not to blame. I will not yield an inch." That is the way the passionate person thinks and speaks who "loses his temper." Temper is a good thing: a young man ought to have spirit. But a temper that is generally bad and violent is a dangerous trait in character. It produces suspicion; it nourishes resentment; it leads to hasty acts.

2. If we are inclined to be charitable, we are peacemakers. The word "charity" means several things; but, of course, we use the word in the sense Paul wrote,—*"The greatest of these is charity"*: our new version says *"love."* Paul had in mind kindness to others, overlooking of little faults, and love of peace. Let us remember in any dispute that we may be somewhat in fault; and, even if the other party is unfair, let us not be too exacting.

3. A peacemaker stops to think of the hurt quarrels make on one's self. When you shake some bottles, all the stuff at the bottom is stirred, and the liquid is discolored. Throwing stones into a calm sheet of water splashes the surface and breaks the mirror. No one can do just right who is wrought up by passions, and lets hatred or bitterness in.

4. A peacemaker need not be a weak, cowardly character. Some of the noblest men in the world have been lovers of peace. They never surrendered any principles: they never were afraid to stand boldly for the right.

5. Sometimes there seems to be a necessity for war. But peace should be the aim of a war in any Christian nation. Washington, Grant, Lincoln, were lovers of peace; but they were obliged to lead their countrymen into the cruel, sad experiences of battle against enemies of liberty, justice, and humanity. There will be an arbitration court some day, we hope, when nations will war no more, but leave all disputes to judges to settle. May that day speedily come!

VI. CLASS TALKS.

Where do you find the Bible passage? Are there any other similar sayings in the same book? What is an "ideal"? Have you one in your mind of some noble life? What did Jesus say about peacemakers and what do we call it? Is there another beatitude like it? Can you remember it? Where does peace-making begin? Do you think we have made any progress since Christianity began? Are wars necessary? What did Penn believe, as a Quaker, about fighting? Have you read about arbitration? Will you help to bring it about?

VII. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. The Story of Abram and Lot.
- II. Example of Penn.
- III. The Personal Peacemaker.
- IV. The National Peacemaker.
- V. Self-restraint, Charity, the Ideal.

LESSON III.

ENTHUSIASM.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Philippians, Chapter III, Verses 13, 14, 15.

Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, even this shall God reveal unto you.

A glorious thing is prudence;
And they are useful friends
Who never make beginnings
Until they see the ends.
But give us now and then a man,
That we may make him King,
Just to scorn the consequence,
And just to do the thing.

Anonymous.

I. A HEBREW ENTHUSIAST.

We might very properly take the author of the Scripture verses in this lesson as our example of enthusiasm. Paul went through perils of all kinds, suffered persecutions, and rejoiced all the time, because he was so full of enthusiasm. But I want you to learn something about a man who lived long before Paul. His name was Nehemiah. There is a book in the Old Testament named for him. In any Bible dictionary you will find the story of his wonderful life,—how he was “cup-bearer” to a Persian king, and finally got permission to go to his own country and rebuild Jerusalem. Hard and dangerous this work was. Some Jews tried to ruin him: he bravely held on, and did not give up until the walls of the city were complete and the people had good government. Nehemiah was a man in earnest.

II. AN ENGLISH EXAMPLE.

Something different, of course, but like Nehemiah, was Oliver Cromwell, of England. His life you ought to know,—a man who had the spirit of the old Hebrew leader. Cromwell was strong, because he was enthusiastic. Other men talked: he acted. Other men saw the wrongs inflicted on the people, and tamely submitted. Cromwell could not be still. He was not afraid to face kings. He did so much that all England honors his name. Find out when he lived, and tell your teacher some of the things he did. He was a man of piety, and we in America owe much to his religious enthusiasm.

III. EVERY-DAY ENTHUSIASM.

Now these are great names, and they refer to men who lived long ago; but they show us the way. We can do something ourselves, in every-day duties, which will prove that we follow their examples.

1. To be like them, we must put our heart into what we do. It may be to study or to play. You know the difference between Robert Halfheart and Paul Wholeheart. You do not like Robert, because he is cold and dull, and lazy perhaps. You cannot depend upon him. He is never more than half alive,—no stir, no warmth about him. You would not go off rambling in the woods with him or ask him to join in some plan. But Paul is ready to “lend a hand,” and listens eagerly to what you have to say. When you are with him, every little thing is of interest: he is awake, and enjoys life. Robert is half-hearted: Paul is whole-hearted.

ENTHUSIASM.

2. These two great men did not give up very easily. Of course, they were not always successful, not everything turned out just right; but they clung to the purpose. A person without enthusiasm is always changing. Have you not seen boys of that kind? They are always saying, "If only I were somebody else, or if I had this or had that, if so and so,"—then how much they would do! That little word "if" is always on their tongues. Enthusiasm makes a way: it is patient, not easily discouraged.

3. With this friend we "look forward, not backward." Of course, we ought to think over our mistakes, and be sorry. But you see what Paul said,—*"forgetting the things behind."* We must forget unkind words, and little troubles, and the hard places, and every day *"press forward."*

4. But you may ask: How did Paul, Nehemiah, Cromwell, and others keep so earnest and cheerful? They believed that God was expecting them to act just that way, and they felt sure He would help them. We cannot do these noble things alone, because our strength comes from our heavenly Father. He is ready to support us in our heart-full plans. When we work with Him, then we need never think of failure. Jesus tells us how to work with Him. So does Paul.

5. This is the grandest enthusiasm,—when we are not thinking too much about ourselves. Some persons are in earnest about matters that are to benefit themselves. They are to get something. A boy at school may be enthusiastic to get a prize; and he will toil hard for it, studying nights, going without sports. That may be worth while; but the higher aim would be to get knowledge, to grow, to be a man, and so help the world. Jesus wanted us to be enthusiastic in saving others; and, in doing that, we would save ourselves.

IV. THINGS YOU MUST NOT FEAR.

Do not be afraid of being called "impulsive." You cannot have too many good impulses. Only make sure you are zealous for truth and the right. Never mind a laugh against you now and then.

Do not stop in a noble plan because you cannot see clear to the end. Take risks in doing good. Have faith in God, and trust the results to Him.

V. CLASS TALKS.

Who was Nehemiah? How does he illustrate enthusiasm? Are there different kinds? Which is the one we want? Have you learned about Oliver Cromwell? What was he called in religious matters? Has he any relation to the Puritans? Can any great thing be done without enthusiasm? Are you able to explain the difference between Robert Halfheart and Paul Wholeheart? Do people sometimes laugh at enthusiastic persons? Why? How did Jesus make his disciples enthusiastic? If any were not in earnest, why did they fail? Must we believe something? What?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. Quotation from Paul.
- II. Career of Nehemiah.
- III. Cromwell's Example.
- IV. Equivalents of Enthusiasm To-day.
- V. The Religious Source of this Power.

VII. TO TEACHERS.

If a blackboard is available, put some stirring quotation on it relating to this subject. In unfolding the lesson, adapt the instruction to the young by anecdotes from history, and by incidents from the lives of devoted scientists, patriots, and reformers. But the Bible is full of illustrations, texts, and characters.

LESSON IV.

HONOR.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Matthew, Chapter VII., Verses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12.

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Honor and shame from no condition rise:
Act well your part, there all the honor lies.

Pope.

Say, what is Honor? 'Tis the finest sense
Of justice which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence,
Suffered or done.

Wordsworth.

I. PARABLE EXAMPLE.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter Twenty, verses one to sixteen, we find the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. Although some began their work much later than others, and not all served the same number of hours, the pay to each laborer was alike. This illustrates our subject,—honor. The employer saw that those who came late threw themselves into the work with all their hearts. Perhaps they made more sacrifices than those who went into the vineyard first. Any way, the man who paid the workmen acted honorably, and dealt generously with those he had hired. Honor is something more than cold justice: it is justice with a heart of sympathy; it adds to bargains the loving Golden Rule.

II. WASHINGTON.

We may well call Washington an example of honor. He early cultivated conscience, which is at the centre of honor; but a conscience alone never makes noble honor. So we find Washington always looking at different sides of every question, and trying hard to be just in a high sense. We are told that sometimes he was overcome by indignation at the conduct of officers; but quickly he controlled himself, and said, "He shall have justice: he shall be heard." It was Washington's deep feeling of honor that gave him so much influence. The people knew that he could be trusted to decide great questions by the finest, noblest standards.

III. WHAT DOES HONOR MEAN?

We have already hinted at the meaning of the word "honor." But let us make it all somewhat clearer.

1. The fairest flowers would not be so fair if the delicate, rich bloom and the rare colors were removed. Such is honor to character: it imparts an attraction, a charm,—yes, a power. Religion ought to make persons honorable. An education that only makes us shrewd and honest and careful is not sufficient. The sense of honor is the poetry of the soul.

Boys often say, when they want to fasten a promise, "On your honor?" And the agreement to that is a pledge, which, if broken, brings the worst disgrace possible on the offender.

2. Not only is honor shown in a sensitive conscience: it is also the Golden Rule in daily practice. Our Bible Passage contains the great law of honor. Treat others as you would like to be treated. When some person feels injured, he will often cry out to his enemy, "Do you call that honorable treatment?" Meaning, Is that the way you would like to be judged, or dealt with, under the same circumstances?

3. So the next thing to say about honor is that you do not find it in those who are cruel and hard-hearted. Because a boy is strong and big, that fact does not give him the right to hector and plague smaller boys. It is not honorable. But there are quite different cases. It is not honorable for a scholar in the day school, who knows his lessons well, to make it uncomfortable for some companion who is not so well prepared. It is not honorable to make fun of schoolmates who are unfortunate in any way, of body or condition. It is not honorable to tell tales about our friends, and spread stories.

4. No! The spirit of honor is the spirit of chivalry. It can be shown in our daily lives. We ought to take up the weak side, and defend those who are not always popular. The dashing knights of old must be produced again in those who are much better, so far as the needs of the world are concerned; in boys and girls, men and women, who believe in fair play, in hearing both sides, in standing up for the right, in judging themselves, as they judge others.

5. So let us remember that honor does not belong to any particular condition in life. Thus said the poet long ago. A greater poet, Shakespeare, wrote,—

"'Tis the mind that makes the body rich;
And, as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
So honor peereth in the meanest habit."

IV. HELPS.

A good way to cultivate this sense of honor is to study the lives of men and women who had this spirit. There was the Chevalier Bayard. George William Curtis is a modern example. Charles Kingsley is another.

Secure and keep a true friend with whom you can talk everything freely. You will discuss what is right, and keep the standard high.

Keep out of your heart the enemies to honor known as Envy, Selfishness, Cruelty. The heart is a palace, where the real king and queen of love and justice should hold royal court.

V. CLASS TALKS.

Can you repeat from memory either of the poetical quotations at the beginning of the lesson? Do you see the fine justice in the parable of the laborers? Do we make Washington real and living? What do you know about his early life? Have you any particular definition of honor? How is it among young people? What do they say about it? Has the Golden Rule anything to do with our subject? What is it to be chivalric? Do we need to go to war to show that spirit? What are some helps to honor?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. Explanation of Parable.
- II. Best definition of Honor.
- III. Illustrations from Life.
- IV. Mention of Enemies to Honor.
- V. The Golden Rule Standard.

VII. TO TEACHERS.

In church and Sunday-School we ought to improve our opportunities for placing a high standard of personal aim. Ordinary aims are taught in common life. The claims of honor and its equivalents must be enforced on the young. See Dole's "The Coming People" and "The Golden Rule in Business," also his A. U. A. tract, "A Chivalrous Religion."

LESSON V.

FIDELITY.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Matthew, Chapter XXV., Verses 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.

And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter: and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own.

The longer on this earth we live
And weigh the various qualities of men,

The more we feel the high stern-featured beauty
Of plain devotedness to duty.

Lowell.

To God, thy country, and thy friend be true.
Vaughan.

I. A HEBREW LEADER.

In the Old Testament book, Exodus, and in other places of the Bible, we read the story of the life of Moses. He was a man of fidelity. He felt that a great duty rested on him, and that duty he tried to meet. Ask your teacher to tell you, in a brief, plain way, the facts in the life of this faithful soul.

II. ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

You all know, or ought to know, a great deal about Lincoln. As a poor boy, he resolved to be faithful to the best he saw and knew. Because of this spirit of fidelity, shown in all he did, step by step he ascended, until at last he was made President of the United States. Then came the terrible war between the North and the South. Through every sad, fearful experience, Lincoln stood at the helm of State, steering the nation to victory and peace. The Union people loved and trusted him. The Southerners respected his character. Lincoln carried a heavy burden, but he never forsook his duty. The bullet of an enemy ended his life, but his grand example lives on to guide every American citizen.

III. THE THREE STRANDS.

There are three strands in this cable of fidelity. Let us see what they are.

1. The mind must have something to say. There must be what we call convictions. The mind sees a path to walk in, and chooses it, and knows why that course is picked out from others.

2. Then the heart says something. It pushes us on to do what we think we ought to do. We are in earnest. We feel we must do just this one thing.

3. And the third contributor is the sense of duty, or ought. What we are doing is not only wise and pleasant: it is also right. Then, come what may, we keep on through difficulties, never giving up, always firmly holding to our plan.

IV. WHY IS FIDELITY SO IMPORTANT?

1. Because we have nothing to depend on, when that trait of

character is gone. You cannot enjoy any other part of life if faithful habits are lacking. Some persons think and talk differently, but they never end well.

2. Even bright people, talented people, do not amount to much in life unless they are faithful to some duty or to some ideal. Patient, steady doing tells better than occasional starts and runs.

3. Doing the best you can, even when that is not always your best, will bring better results than waiting and shirking, hoping for opportunities. Each day comes bringing some demand. Meet it then and there, and do not postpone.

4. He who shows fidelity encourages others. If your light is shining, it will help another who is in the darkness. We can all be faithful, just as we can all be honorable. Fidelity is not a part of great deeds alone.

5. If we run away from any duty, we weaken our power to grapple the next one. The habit grows of excusing ourselves, and we find it easy to manufacture reasons why we cannot do what is expected.

V. THE TEACHING OF JESUS.

All through what Jesus taught is the lesson of fidelity. Does not the Bible Passage teach this with wonderful power? But there is a particular thought in this parable of the talents. It raises the question, Are there different ideas about fidelity?

The man to whom one talent was given thought he was showing the faithful spirit by putting what he had away, and keeping it ready for his master, just as he received it. "Lo," he said, when asked to give account, "thou hast thine own." And he handed the one talent back to the giver.

"Faithful over a few things" does not mean locking up what we have. We must improve on the past. We must make our minds grow. We must join in reforms. We must make the world better.

The spirit of fidelity is needed everywhere. Christianity means faithfulness. There are duties to God, duties to others, duties to ourselves. The spirit of Jesus fills all his teachings. He was faithful to the bitter end.

VI. CLASS TALKS.

Do you have any trouble in understanding the parable of the talents? What did the lord in the story do with him who returned the one talent? Do you think that was severe? Can you tell any incident from the life of Moses? Did he stop to consider what was pleasant? Do you admire Lincoln? Why? If he had run away from Washington in the Civil War, would we honor him as much as we do? What are the "three strands" in the cable of fidelity? Can any one, however bright and great, make success without faithful doing? Is it our duty to make the most and best of ourselves? For what purpose? What does the religion of Jesus stand for to us?

VII. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. The Bible Passage.
- II. Career of Moses.
- III. Lincoln's Devotion to Duty.
- IV. Fidelity means Constancy.
- V. Daily Discipleship.

LESSON VI.

COURTESY.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Romans, Chapter XII., Verses 10, 11, 15, 16.

In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another; in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord. Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Father, who bid'st Thy sun to shine
Upon the evil and the good,
Oh, may we share, as sons of Thine,
The kindly heart of brotherhood!

Anonymous.

Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest offer'd courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
With smoky rafters than in tap'stry hall
And courts of princes.

Milton.

I. IN ANCIENT STORY LAND.

In these lessons we have already referred to Abram, to illustrate peace-making. Again we turn to the beginnings of the Bible, to find a subject for this lesson on Courtesy. It is one good result in our studies together if we bring to light some scenes in the Scriptures not generally read and known. In Genesis, chapter twenty-three, verses three to end, we have the story of the death of Abram's wife, Sarah, and her burial. How courteous and kind the people were! They were filled with sympathy. They offered Abram the choice of a burial-place, without money or price. The whole picture is a touching one, and lights up the distant centuries in a tender, gracious way.

II. JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

We are proud in America of the poet Whittier, and we may well take his spirit and life to illustrate courtesy. He was born in 1807, and passed on to higher life in 1892. Ask for some book at the library which tells his life and describes his character. He was a Quaker, simple in manners, gentle, kind to all, and a writer of stanzas that tend to make men good, considerate, and brotherly. Commit some of his best poetry to memory, as your teacher may direct. It will be a valuable investment, and help out your store of literary treasures. But behind and above the poet was the man Whittier,—calm, strong, courteous, loving. The humblest visitor at his home received the same cordial welcome as the most distinguished, and to all he was sincerely gracious.

III. MANNERS.

Of course we expect those who are courteous to be polite, but polite manners are only a small part. Yes, really, only a small part. Because a person can be polite and yet not be inwardly courteous. The word "courtesy" comes from habits at royal courts, where there were always outward forms of grace and good will, with very much heart bitterness and hatred. The court was accustomed to say, "Manners make the man"; but we in this republic say, "The man makes the manners."

Neither is the observance of etiquette, as taught in books, courtesy. That, too, is made up of rules for good behavior, and helps to keep order in society.

COURTESY.

Simple civility falls short of courtesy. A civil person, and that alone, acts decorously, answers questions, and does not insult you. He is not the real gentleman.

IV. WHAT, THEN, IS OUR ANSWER?

Suppose we ask a rare gentleman, like Sir Philip Sidney. He answers, "High thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy." Or, if we question Emerson, he replies, "Do not leave the sky out of your landscape."

But we must take this home in plainer language.

Courtesy is a steady disposition to treat others thoughtfully; to treat them with consideration. Let us see how this applies to everyday life.

This rule calls for respect. We must respect the rights of others. We are not the only ones who are hurried or troubled. Let us "put ourselves in the places of others."

Many times we must be kind and forbearing when it is not easy. Some harsh word or unthankful act may hurt our feelings: then is the time to be courteous. Self-control is a great part of courtesy.

We must not be too anxious to push ourselves forward. In conversation a good listener gives the chief charm. Hear the whole story, and draw out your companion.

Seek to make others happy. How rude we often are in parties and gatherings!—never seeking out the bashful and unacquainted; too often looking out for ourselves and our own enjoyment. In society, frequently, those who are called in certain circles the most fashionable are the least courteous outside their "set."

V. DAILY HABITS.

Discussions often arise over the question of politeness and sincerity. How shall we treat those who are bad and wrong? How far can we be polite, when we feel indignant?

There is always place for honest rebuke and plain words in the habits of courtesy. Only be careful not to confuse anger with indignation, and pride with conscience.

Many persons are blunt and harsh, and they call it candor. Others are rude and rough, and they flatter themselves they are admired for their honesty of manner. Not so. We can be gentle yet firm, pleasant yet honest, courteous and still loyal to convictions.

Take heed to the little things, and the larger courtesies will take care of themselves. It is useless to try to be known in the world as a true gentleman or as a real lady, if at home or school, or with friends, we grow up with heartless, selfish daily habits.

VI. CLASS TALKS.

What is meant in the Bible Passage by "condescend to things that are lowly"? Must we patronize poor people? Or does it mean to put ourselves on a friendly level? Will you have your teacher explain the story from Genesis about Abram's wife? Where did the poet Whittier live? Can you recite any lines he wrote? Are Quakers usually polite? What are manners? What is etiquette? Does good behavior make a gentleman? Do you remember what Sir Philip Sidney said? Can you tell a famous story about him and a soldier on the battlefield? What is meant by "putting sky into your landscape"? What can that have to do with courtesy? Does courtesy spring from the heart? Can we be honest and frank and still be polite?

VII. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. Ancient Customs of Courtesy.
- II. Incidents in Whittier's Life.
- III. Distinctions in Behavior.
- IV. Marks of Courtesy.
- V. The Christian Spirit of Brotherhood.

LESSON VII.

FIRMNESS.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Matthew, Chapter X., Verses 24, 25, 26, 27, 38, 39.

A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light: and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops. And he that doth not take his cross, and follow after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

In God's own might
We gird us for the coming fight;
And, strong in Him whose cause is ours,
In conflict with unholy powers,
We grasp the weapons He has given,—
The Light and Truth and Love of Heaven.
Whittier.

God of truth! Thy sons should be
Firmly grounded upon Thee;
Ever on the Rock abide,
High above the changing tide.
Anonymous.

I. JEREMIAH.

In choosing the prophet Jeremiah for our Bible example in this lesson, we must remember just what our subject is,—firmness. You will find many things recorded about him in the book of the Old Testament bearing his name. Jeremiah has been called the “weeping prophet,” because his view of life was not always cheerful. He often found reasons to mourn over his people, the Jews; and he frequently foretold disasters. But he was firm to the end; and if, with your teacher, you get a wiser acquaintance with this sad prophet, there will be some benefit. It is not the fashion now to pay much attention to Jeremiah. He is too gloomy. But there was great strength in his character. He loved his countrymen, and sought their best welfare. To that end he suffered. He was not afraid to stand out for the right. Nothing could move him from the truth as he saw it.

II. GLADSTONE.

In our century lived a man who had the trait of firmness to a great degree. He has only recently passed away. William Ewart Gladstone was a man of great steadfastness. Another great character lived at the same time, who exhibited this quality, too. That was the famous Bismarck, of Germany. Both statesmen showed remarkable decision and power of will; but we admire Gladstone more. He was of larger heart and a wider love for mankind. Gladstone changed his views during his life, but he never changed his steadfastness of purpose. His strength gave strength to others. He was not sad and melancholy, like the prophet of old, though he was often very serious and anxious over the troubles of the world. Gladstone was sometimes abused, sometimes his life was threatened; but he never played the coward. To his queen, to England, to his cause, he ever remained loyal.

III. DIFFERENT SOURCES OF FIRMNESS.

1. One kind of firmness in character springs from self-respect.

If we think of ourselves as we ought to think, we do not break down a certain manly spirit in our manner. We do not throw away at every challenge our own judgment and way of looking at things. Every boy knows what that means. His playmates try to convince him, and he has his own views. He is firm for the right as he sees it. He has too much respect for himself to change around like a vane with every wind.

2. Another source of firmness is found in will-power. Weakness of will is a fatal disease. Strength of will is the brave right arm of doing. When we promise ourselves to do anything, let us be sure we carry out the pledge, or the injury to our future courage will be great.

3. In order to keep our lessons clearly apart, let us compare fidelity and firmness. There is a wide difference. Fidelity is the faithful performance of duties. That was our lesson point of view. But firmness is the hold-on and hold-fast trait of character. Fidelity is devotion to obligations and to an ideal. Firmness is that strong spirit which keeps the head-sources of our character permanent. We must be strong and steadfast before we can be courteous or faithful; that is, we must be self-reliant, in a proper way, and self-directed. Fidelity looks out and asks, What must I do? Firmness looks within and says, Be strong, be resolute, be manly.

IV. ILLUSTRATION.

A new bridge is to be examined. It spans a river, and is intended to serve the people of two towns. Among the first requirements is this test,—is it well built, firm, and steady? If so, then it will be a faithful servant of the public. If not, it must be improved before it is opened for general use.

Bad men are often firm. Noted generals and leaders have possessed this strength of will. Firmness is neither good nor bad in itself. All depends on the use we make of it. But this we know: that goodness, righteousness, truth, cannot spread in the world unless those who stand for these things are squarely, solidly founded in firmness. Yea, to be yea, and nay, to be nay.

So said Jesus, when he described the building on sand or on rock. The wise ones did not fear the winds and rains. They were safe on granite strength and security.

V. CLASS TALKS.

When Jesus spoke to his disciples in the words of the Bible Passage, do you suppose they were made bold? Have you ever read anything about the prophet Jeremiah? What have you to say about him? What do you know about Gladstone? Where did he live, and what did he do? Do you admire firmness? Can you explain the difference between firmness and fidelity? Must we first be firm before we can be faithful? Does fidelity look out or in? How is it with firmness? Do they both look within and without? Can you mention some other illustration besides the bridge? Are bad men sometimes firm?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. The Call of Jesus to Steadfastness.
- II. Best View of Jeremiah.
- III. Gladstone's Strong Convictions.
- IV. Incorruptible Character.
- V. Distinctions: Firmness, Fidelity, Faith.

VII. TO TEACHERS.

The accent in this lesson is on will-power. See James Freeman Clarke's "Education of the Will," in "Self-culture." For Jeremiah's life and character consult any good Bible dictionary, or Spaulding's "Later Heroes of Israel." Facts as to Gladstone are accessible in files of *Review of Reviews* and current biography.

LESSON VIII.

REVERENCE.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Matthew, Chapter XII., Verses 1 to 9.

At that season Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn-fields; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck ears of corn, and to eat. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless? But I say unto you, That one greater than the temple is here. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath.

More servants wait on man
Than he'll take notice of. In every path
He treads down that which doth befriend him,
When sickness makes him pale and wan.
O mighty Love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him.

George Herbert.

I. JESUS AND THE PHARISEES.

Nothing better for our purpose could be offered than the Bible Passage in our lesson. It flashes a strong light on the two kinds of reverence, one being true, the other false.

Jesus stands for the real spirit of reverence,—always, everywhere.

The Pharisee stands for the false, hollow reverence that has lost sight of truth and God.

There is always need of more true reverence in the world; and, when the Christian religion is correctly taught, it is sure to increase that spirit. But continually rises the Pharisee with his opposition, who asks us to make forms and human follies the objects of our reverence.

There are still others who do not believe in reverence, and laugh at it. They are neither with Jesus nor with the Pharisee. Such persons would drag down that which is noble and high. Their souls are small, and their thoughts bitter.

II. TO-DAY.

In our Scripture selection, Jesus tells the enemies who were following him that God and man are greater than observances. Sunday was made for man, not man for Sunday. God is to be revered, not man-made laws. There are those to-day who represent Jesus, and there are others to-day who take the Pharisees' side. We ought to make careful choice, and put ourselves on the right side.

III. WHAT IS REVERENCE?

Obeisance unto greatness understood;
The first step of a human life toward good.

You may ask: What is reverence? How does it differ from admiration or worship?

They are all quite different. The spirit of reverence is a condition of the mind in which lies a deep respect for some object. Reverence contains more or less awe. In the presence of giant mountains, like the ice-clad Alps, or when we gaze upon a mighty storm at sea, then the reverential spirit is strong.

When we say we "revere our ancestors," we are speaking of

reverence in still another sense. This time it is not awe, but veneration, that stirs us. We honor with great regard those who founded the Republic, because of their heroism and wisdom.

Another form of reverence is shown when lawyers bow to judges, and the members of a court-room show deference to the place. Reverence is paid to the majesty of the law as represented in the judges and officers. A judge can punish any one, without trial, who shows contempt of court. This form of reverence may be called a strong sense of respect.

IV. SOME WAYS.

1. There is reverence for Deity, which prevents us from taking the name of God in vain.

2. Then we see a reverence for persons. It is a sad hour for any boy or girl when he or she forgets the deference due elders, because, when such courtesies are slighted, the door is opened for many worse things. Old people are entitled to consideration.

3. There is a reverence appropriate to places. In church, at certain gatherings, the spirit of respect should be so strong as to keep us decorous and dignified.

4. Reverence for subjects that are pure and holy should guard our lips. And it ought to be our delight to respect all persons so much as to avoid conversations that sully the thought or cause pain to others.

5. Among these kinds let us not omit a reverence for the times, the leaders, the opportunities, that are now and here. Every young person ought to respond to this call. Some turn back, and honor the past; they find nothing grand in our day. Others dream of a future full of claims of reverence. We must revere the present. It is full of God-given privileges. Honor it, and it will honor you.

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes.

Mrs. Browning.

V. CLASS TALKS.

Who were the Pharisees? What did they say to Jesus? Why did they speak in this way? What did Jesus mean by his reply? Can you explain the two kinds of reverence, the true and the false? Are there some persons without any reverence? How do they act and think? Can you tell the difference between reverence and admiration? Between reverence and worship? What is the illustration of reverence in a court-room? In the Alps? For one's ancestors? Are there different forms or kinds of reverence? Will you mention some?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. Scene in Bible Passage.
- II. Reverence for God and Man.
- III. True and False Reverence.
- IV. Different Forms.
- V. Application to Modern Life.

VII. TO TEACHERS.

A very important subject, to be handled judiciously. Modern life needs more reverence. Our New World instills a spirit of irreverence. For help see James Freeman Clarke's "Reverence and its Cultivation," in "Self-culture"; "Reverence," in Kramer's "The Right Road."

LESSON IX.

UNSELFISHNESS.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Luke, Chapter X, Verses 30 to 38.

A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho: and he fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and, when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and, when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for, if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not.

Shakespeare.

I. THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

Why is it that all people love the parable of the Good Samaritan? Because this kind man in the story was unselfish. He probably had more to do than the priest or Levite. He was a busier man; but, for all that, he stopped, and helped this poor fellow out of his troubles just because the sufferer was a human being in distress. There are many travellers along life's highway who offer pleasant words, and say, "I am so sorry," to those who are in trouble; but, as Sydney Smith said, they do not go to the expense of oil and money. But the priest and Levite did not even give the greeting of a friendly, sympathetic word. The Good Samaritan is the Bible example of our subject.

II. JOHN HOWARD.

There lived a man from 1726 to 1790, an Englishman, who tried to be a Good Samaritan among the unfortunate and criminals. He did so much good in his lifetime that he was called "the philanthropist." All his time, wealth, and ability he gave to the task of improving the condition of hospitals, penitentiaries, and pest-houses. Nothing frightened him, and he ventured everywhere—on land and sea—in prosecuting his plans. John Howard was a great benefactor of the human race. In St. Paul's, London, is a statue to his memory; but the affection and praise of good people everywhere in the world make the noblest testimony to his unselfish character.

III. WHY ARE WE SELFISH?

We cannot prevent attention to self. Each one is different from all others. In a proper degree and in a right way we must always be "looking out for ourselves." That is building character. Now selfhood, or the making of a strong character, is right. But how is it to be made? That is the great question.

The foolish man is greedy, pushing, hard-hearted, and he gets certain rewards; but they are not of the best kind,—they are selfish gains. The wise man may not "get on" as fast as the selfish, crowding man; but he grows in goodness and real soul power. The wise man is the kind man who sacrifices for others. He lives in the out-

door, noble friendship of all good people. The foolish man, by his selfishness, shuts himself in, and is cut off from humanity.

IV. THE REASONS.

But young people like to have reasons given for any statement, so let us see why unselfishness is so praiseworthy.

1. The unselfish spirit is the source of the greatest happiness. To do kind acts to others and see the smile of joy is the finest experience one can have. Even the bad and mean people confess that this is so, but they are not strong enough to practise such goodness. Nobody ever repented of a generous word or a loving act.

2. The trait of unselfishness resembles the divine quality of mercy. God's nature is forgiving and merciful. When we are thoughtful for others, and gentle, we are like God. We cannot hope to be very wise or very learned or very powerful, but we can all be unselfish; and that is the Jesus spirit.

3. Then we know, also, that unselfishness promotes the largest good of the greatest number. We live in a Christian Republic, where the welfare of each one depends on the welfare of all. "We are members of one body." If we are grasping and cruel and hard, we hurt the good of others; and then we are hurt in return. Our disposition affects all with whom we come in contact.

4. We must remember, further, that our privileges, our ability,—all we have,—are only so much loaned to us to be used for the good of all. We do not own our money or talents: we do not own anything, in one sense. All we have and are is in trust. Jesus said we are stewards, and must give account of our doings. If we are selfish and seek only to enjoy a selfish life, then we shall be condemned.

5. The unselfish spirit is the fountain of so many traits of character which we all want that we ought ever and always to keep our hearts loving and tender. From this spirit spring generosity, sympathy, charity, sacrifice, devotion. Are not these desirable? Without them the kingdom of God can never come.

V. CLASS TALKS.

Why, do you think, did the priest and Levite pass by on the other side? Did the Samaritans have trouble with the Jews? Was the act of the Samaritan nobler in view of this fact? Can you tell anything about John Howard? Can you name any other characters like Howard? Ought we to "look out for ourselves"? When does that become selfishness? Is the man who takes care only for himself a wise man? What is the difference between selfhood and selfishness? Can you mention any of the reasons why we ought to be unselfish? Can a Christian Republic prosper on selfishness?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. The Parable of the Good Samaritan.
- II. John Howard's Life.
- III. Selfhood and Self-seeking.
- IV. Grounds for the Unselfish Spirit.
- V. The Jesus Law and Example.

VII. TO TEACHERS.

Discuss the question in the class how far one ought to go in sacrifice, in order to make the members think. Be sure to show the ground arguments for unselfishness. In no other way can we hope to make progress against the superficial view of the world, which bids youth "look out for No. 1," and nourishes a heathenish spirit of greed and shrewdness.

LESSON X.

CONTENTMENT.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Philippians, Chapter IV., Verses 8 to 14.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you. But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in every thing and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me. Howbeit ye did well, that ye had fellowship with my affliction.

Why thus longing, thus for ever sighing,
For the far-off, unattained, and dim,
While the beautiful, all round thee lying,
Offers up its low, perpetual hymn?
Wouldst thou listen to its gentle teaching,
All thy restless yearnings it would still;
Leat and flower and laden bee are preaching
Thine own sphere, though humble, first to fill.

Harriet Winslow.

I. CONTENTED PAUL.

When we think of Saint Paul's enthusiasm, of his tireless energy, we hardly expect in him such a trait as contentment. This is sometimes called a "passive virtue"; that is, it does not assert itself, like will, ambition, or zeal. But Paul was full of content. So he says in the Bible Passage, and we know it was true by what he did. Though he was an apostle, he was willing to work at his trade, making tents, and sew for a living whenever it was necessary. Though he was very learned and had been educated in the best schools of his day, yet he was happy to go anywhere and speak to the humblest men and women about Jesus and "the good news." Paul seemed to be contented in every condition, if he felt sure he was doing his duty.

II. THOREAU.

There lived a man not many years ago, in Massachusetts, who had this spirit of contentment in abundance. His name was Henry David Thoreau, and a great deal has been written about him. His own books are widely read. Thoreau lived for some time in a shanty by the border of a beautiful lake; and there, alone, he studied the ways of the birds, followed the tracks of animals, and learned the secrets of the woods. He seemed to be contented to live that way, though most of us would find it very lonesome. Not only was he a man of strong mind, but he was also a good swimmer, runner, skater, boatman, and builder. It would not do for all persons to live as Thoreau did, but his experience proves that contentment does not consist in having many things or living in the crowded towns. Ask your teacher to tell stories about this "hermit."

III. DIVINE DISCONTENT.

Did you ever hear that before,— "divine discontent"? Preachers and writers often use that saying. They mean that there are two kinds of discontent. One is full of fret, fault-finding, cross temper, unreasonableness. The other is a noble desire to improve, to grow, to become better. This latter is called "divine," because it leads us on and up to God. Of course, we ought not to be lazy, satisfied, conceited;

such a state is wrong. You may call it false content, a snare, and an enemy. We lose all noble ambition.

IV. CONTENTMENT AND CHARACTER.

Now let us mention what contentment helps us to reach and to be, — true content, when we try to look on the bright side, and make the most of ourselves and the best of circumstances.

1. The contented person is more likely to have self-control than is he who growls and grumbles. He who is never satisfied with things soon grows dissatisfied with himself, and shows his feelings in unpleasant ways. If we are all the time complaining, we are sure to lose control of our thoughts and our plans; and then we have lost our power over others.

2. The spirit of content is the source of obedience. No matter how old we grow to be, obedience is the mark of a noble character. When young, we are obedient to parents and teachers. Afterward we learn to be obedient to laws, to conscience, to the proper requirements of society. No man ever grew so wise that he did not feel humble, if he was truly a learned man. Contentment points to the obedience which respects that which time has hallowed and experience justified.

3. Contentment is at the heart of cheerfulness. There is a sunshine of the soul, and we all want it; but it never comes to the fussy, to the cross, to the grumbler. How is the best work in the world done? In the spirit of cheerfulness. The happy doer is the inspiring leader. Now good nature and good temper are made strong by contentment. Put your heart into what you are doing, and then full enjoyment comes.

4. Another gift, and still another, are patience and usefulness. If we hope to hold out, to endure, and if we want to be useful in the world, we must cultivate contentment. The impatient spirit sends us skipping from one thing to another. We never finish anything, and all the fragments make us more discontented than before. Contentment holds our talents in place, and gets the most out of them. The stars are held by the law of gravitation to their places, and patiently they go their rounds. The meteors flash and rush across the sky, and are seen no more.

V. CLASS TALKS.

What is contentment sometimes called? Must we all have it? Do young people need it? What is "divine discontent"? Is that needed, too? What is false content? How did Paul show the true spirit? Would you have expected it from him? Is it easy for some persons to be contented? Is it more credit to others who find it hard? Who was Thoreau? Do you know the name of the lake where he lived? What did he do? Can you mention some helps to character from contentment? Do people like those who are always complaining? How can we cultivate this spirit of content?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. Paul and his Spirit of Content.
- II. The Lesson of Thoreau's Life.
- III. Divine Discontent.
- IV. Relation of Contentment to Character.
- V. What Christianity teaches on this Subject.

VII. TO TEACHERS.

This is a subject which young people are not so concerned about as with more aggressive topics. But there is abundant place for it in the course of true teaching. Bring the matter home by illustrations from home, school studies, and every-day life. Boys and girls are often "spoiled," and display disagreeable habits, springing chiefly from discontent. Lack of love at home, fault-finding, envy, a restive spirit, — these can be somewhat cured by content.

LESSON XI.

WORSHIP.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

John, Chapter IV., Verses 19, 20, 21, 23, 24.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.

Be it the organ's pealing,
Be it some mountain high,
Be it the swell of ocean,
Or calm of star-lit sky;
Be it the grace of childhood
Or look of human love,—
All love of good is worship
That lifts toward God above.

M. J. Savage.

I. DAVID.

In the Old Testament we read about David, who rose from a shepherd-boy to be king. His life was full of exciting, romantic events. After becoming king, he seized a little city called Jebus, and changed its name to Jerusalem. Then he made a famous place of this city, and brought the "ark of the Lord" there, so that all the tribes of the Jews might come and worship. David composed some hymns, and they were sung in the temple. He did a great deal to make the worship of those times very impressive and attractive. So we can very well take King David as our Bible example of one who believed in public worship, and did much to support it.

II. EMERSON.

But there is another kind of worship, or, at least, another form. Jesus mentioned it in his talk with the woman at the well. He referred to the temple, and he knew that the woman followed the custom of worship, from David down; but he said, "You do not need to go to Jerusalem." Jesus did not say it was wrong to go to Jerusalem to worship: he did that, and "taught in the temple." But he did mean that we can worship God, also, in any place, when our hearts are turned to Him.

In our country appeared a rare soul, Ralph Waldo Emerson, who told every one, in poems, lectures, and books, that what Jesus uttered by the well of Samaria was true, very true, and must be heeded. He was a preacher, but left the pulpit, believing that his message could be better given outside the churches. Emerson loved to see God in everything, and he raised altars of adoration along the paths of every-day life. Yet he did not say churches ought to cease; but, like Jesus, he taught the world to see that outside churches and in them God calls His children to worship Him "in spirit and in truth." Learn to understand and to cherish the writings of the "Seer of Concord."

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP.

It was Emerson who said, "What greater calamity can fall upon a nation than the loss of worship?" You see he does not mention the loss of money or territory or fame: no, the greatest hurt to our country would be the failure to maintain worship.

WORSHIP.

A ship was wrecked on the reefs of an island in the Pacific Ocean. The sailors reached land, but dreaded a possible death at the hands of savages. One climbed a bluff, and looked around. "Come on!" he shouted to the others. "It's all right: here's a church!" That tells the story. It is safer for all in a land where the church spire points to the sky.

IV. WORSHIP AND CHURCHES.

Now, believing that each one ought to remember God and worship Him in the heart and with the mind, let us talk about public worship. Young people must learn the duty of church-going and the benefits of Sunday worship.

1. On Sunday we leave our own little affairs, and think of the things that are large, of things that concern all mankind. This keeps us from selfishness, and makes us more valuable to others.

2. In the church we meet as one family. The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man are taught. And, when we find it hard to do the right, we feel stronger, after a service in church, to go out and meet our duty. Young persons often write letters to ministers, saying, "I was very much helped by what you said in your sermon," or "I went to church discouraged, but the hymns and your prayer gave me new courage."

3. There are many feelings that come to us on Sunday in church, and many thoughts which we are not likely to have when alone. The place, the service, the congregation, all affect us. There is a time to play and a time to pray; there is a time to laugh and a time to be serious. And, if we never find time to be serious, to pray, to worship, our characters will never be strong.

V. JOYOUS WORSHIP.

In old times going to church was a gloomy experience for children. It is not so now. Flowers on the pulpit, beautiful music, cheerful Sunday Schools, help to make everything bright. The worship now is loving and happy: God is not a Being of wrath; death is "but a covered way," that leads to Him; and Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Let the young people begin early to show loyalty to public worship; and, in so doing, they will not only pay rightful homage to the Supreme Being, but life for them and for all will be made richer and nobler.

VI. CLASS TALKS.

Who was David? What did he do to revive worship? Can you tell anything about the "ark of the Lord"? Was Jerusalem the great place for the Jews to worship? What did Jesus say about this? To whom? Did he tell us not to go to church? What did he mean? Have you anything to tell about Emerson? Did he ever preach? What did he say in his books? Did he want to do away with churches? Is a country better where the people observe Sunday and go to church? What are some of the benefits mentioned? Can you give other reasons? Would you like to see all the churches torn down? What is the greatest loss a nation can have?

VII. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. David as a Lover of the Temple.
- II. The Exact Meaning of Jesus at Samaria's Well.
- III. How Emerson helped Worship.
- IV. The Value of Church-going.
- V. Worship "in Spirit and Truth."

LESSON XII.

ADMIRATION.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Matthew, Chapter VI., Verses 20 to 24 and 33.

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. . . . But seek ye first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

O pure Reformers! not in vain
Your trust in human kind;
The good which bloodshed could not gain
Your peaceful zeal shall find.
Press on! and, if we may not share
The glory of your fight,
We'll ask at least, in earnest prayer,
God's blessing on the right.

Whittier.

No, no! from the street's rude bustle,
From trophies of mart and stage,
I would fly to the wood's low rustle
And the meadow's kindly page.
Let me dream as of old by the river,
And be loved for the dream away!
For a dreamer lives forever,
And a toiler dies in a day.

John Boyle O'Reilly.

I. THE DISCIPLES.

If we would find beautiful examples of admiration — heartfelt, loving admiration — in the New Testament, we must read about the disciples of Jesus. Ask your teacher to give some description of these "friends of Jesus" who left their work and followed him. They did not always understand the Great Teacher; but they believed in him, and trusted his leadership. One of the twelve ceased to admire Jesus: then he fell. The story of Judas is a sad one.

II. PHILLIPS BROOKS.

Among the great American preachers was Bishop Brooks. He made Trinity Church, in Boston, famous; but his best work was in stirring young people to aspire and look up. Wherever he preached, crowds always gathered to listen. His spirit was like the disciples of old. He was simple, earnest, and full of the Christ spirit. So he admired what was good and beautiful in the world, and helped others to see the same uplifting truths. It was he who said: "No true man can live a half life when he has really learned that it is a half life. The other half, the higher half, must haunt him." And a woman has written, "There are certain things we feel to be beautiful and good, and we must hunger after them."

III. LOOK UP.

Edward Everett Hale's mottoes for the Lend a Hand Clubs are well known. One is, "Look up, not down." That means hope and courage, but it also means admiration. Yes; and, still more, it means aspiration. A poet has said that we save our lives by longing. And yet, in a preceding lesson, we were told that we ought not to be yearning and longing for what we cannot obtain.

ADMIRATION.

Here we must use our good sense. There is truth in each saying. Our purpose must be much larger, higher, than our reach, or we can never make progress; but we must not be idle dreamers. It is good to be a dreamer, but not an idle one. Michel Angelo dreamed, and then he toiled hard with his chisel over the marble to carve the vision he had in stone. Reformers dream of the good time to come, but they do not stop there. They go to work and do all they can to make their hopes come true.

IV. AN IDEAL.

This is what we mean by "having an ideal." If we never admire, never aspire, then we never have an ideal to draw us on and up to the better and best.

How can we make an ideal and keep it?

1. By learning about Jesus and by knowing what he said and did. He taught us what ought to be. He showed the pattern of the better way. He looked up to heavenly things, and we should try to look at everything as he did.

2. By cultivating in ourselves a love for what is true, good, and beautiful. We can make a habit for ourselves of sneering or of praising. There are some good people who honestly believe that they are doing right when they criticise and depreciate everything; they imagine it shows great ability. It does not. Better be like Phillips Brooks, who was truly great, yet who appreciated the humblest effort for improvement and encouraged it.

3. By the reading of books of biography. Have some heroes. Admire some characters of the past. Do not slavishly copy what they did, but enter into their spirit. Said the sturdy Carlyle, "No nobler feeling than this of admiration for one higher than himself dwells in the breast of man."

V. CAUTION.

We have supposed all along in this lesson that we will admire the true, the good, the beautiful, and that our ideal shall be worthy. But that does not always come true. Sometimes young people grow up with false ideas, and they admire wrong examples. This is a terrible misdirection of a giant power within each one of us. Yet, after all, if we remember the examples at home and of our teachers, we are not likely to go wrong.

VI. CLASS TALKS.

What did Jesus mean by, "where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also"? Did the disciples admire Jesus? Did that make them love him? Did they try to be like him? Is that the way of the true Christian now? Can you tell anything about Phillips Brooks? Was he a great man in size? Where did he preach? Did he love young people? How did he help them? Is it right to dream dreams? Will that be enough? How do you put doing and dreaming together? What is an "ideal"? Is it a purpose in life? How can we make an ideal and keep it? Whom do you admire? What is the meaning of "aspiration"? Can we admire wrong examples? Ought we to be careful?

VII. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. The Bible Passage.
- II. Pattern on the Mount: an Ideal.
- III. "Look up" Motto.
- IV. Phillips Brooks and his Character.
- V. How to cultivate a Noble Admiration.

LESSON XIII.

THOUGHTFULNESS.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Proverbs III., Verses 13 to 23.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her. The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens. By His knowledge the depths were broken up, and the skies drop down the dew. My son, let not them depart from thine eyes; keep sound wisdom and discretion; so shall they be life unto thy soul and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way securely, and thy foot shall not stumble.

Fine thoughts are wealth, for the right use of which
Men are and ought to be accountable,
If not to Thee, to those they influence.
Grant this, we pray Thee, and that all who read
Or utter noble thoughts may make them theirs,
And thank God for them, to the betterment
Of their succeeding life.

Bailey.

I. MANY STREAMS: ONE SOURCE.

Did you ever stop to think (that is thoughtfulness) how many different good results thoughtfulness brings to pass?

1. Gratitude is one. The grateful person is the one who appreciates what has been done for him, and he does not forget. He thinks often and joyfully of the benefactor. But ingratitude is caused by thoughtlessness. When we are careless, we are in danger of being ungrateful.

2. Politeness is assisted by thoughtfulness. The rude person is often the heedless boy or girl who "didn't think." If we are thoughtful, we are considerate of others.

3. Good judgment is created by thoughtfulness. You trust some friends more than others in asking advice. Why? Because you know they are thoughtful, and will not treat your questions in a shallow way. No one respects a flippant mind.

4. Thoughtfulness helps strengthen our conscience. We may want to see the right and try to do it; but, if we cannot think hard and long, we may not be able to see our true course. Conscience requires education. It needs eyes. If we are thoughtful, then we are likely to do justice to everybody.

5. The thoughtful person is the happy one. It is hard to think, and young people try to escape it; but, in the end, there is great gain. We escape many blunders, and lay up treasures of happy memories. It is a great mistake to suppose that the thoughtless, selfish, giddy young person is the happier. Appearances deceive. Thoughtfulness stores the mind, keeps the heart cheerful, and gives you a feeling of real power. Character builds on that rock.

II. MARTHA AND MARY.

If you will turn to your Bible, and find the tenth chapter in Luke, there, beginning with verse 38, is a story about two women, friends of Jesus. He went to their house; and one of the two, Martha, at once made great preparations for dinner. But Mary asked Jesus to talk, desiring to listen and learn what he might teach. Martha was disturbed, and came from her duties and complained, saying that Mary

ought to do her part in the care and work. Jesus replied that Martha was too anxious and worried, while Mary was to be praised.

Jesus did not mean that work was not necessary. He did not mean, either, that Martha was entirely wrong. This is what the story teaches: Martha was not thoughtful, though she appeared to be. She rushed away, as soon as Jesus came, to make everything ready. There was time for her to listen to Jesus first, as Mary did, and hear his "words of eternal life," and then attend to her duties.

III. THE REVOLVING MIND.

Some persons have what I call "revolving minds." Their ideas go round and round like windmills; but they do not think very much. Did you ever see the big wheels of a locomotive slip on a wet rail and whirl around swiftly with great noise? There was no headway. Soon the wheels caught the rail; and, with no noise and slower motion, the heavy train moved forward.

I want young people to cultivate habits of thinking. We may have a hundred suggestions, and fill our minds with any thought that comes along, but, like the locomotive wheels on the wet rail, our actual progress in thinking may be nothing.

IV. WHY?

We may ask: Why is it our duty to be thoughtful? Is this a religious obligation? Yes. No one can be good and noble, a Christian, who does not have thoughtfulness.

It is due others, that they may be treated justly.

It is due ourselves, that we may grow up strong in character.

It is due our church, that we may have and hold convictions.

It is due God, who gave us reason and thought, to know Him and obey His laws.

V. CLASS TALKS.

From what book in the Bible is our Scripture passage taken? What are proverbs? Does wisdom come from thoughtfulness? Which is the greater power in the world, feeling or thought? If everybody must think, what do we mean by thoughtfulness? Does it help many good results? How does it make gratitude? What has thoughtfulness to do with politeness? Can you mention other effects? What is the story of Martha and Mary? Do you think Jesus did not want Martha to do anything for him? What did he mean? Can you explain why thoughtfulness is a religious duty? What is the illustration of the locomotive on the wet rails?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

I. How Thoughtfulness enriches Character.

II. Examples from History.

III. Need in our Day.

IV. Its Place in Religious Belief.

V. Its Place in Human Advancement.

VII. TO TEACHERS.

James Freeman Clarke has an excellent chapter on this subject in "Self Culture," entitled "The Reflective Powers." Let each teacher appreciate the importance of this lesson. Modern life, with its distractions, is breaking down mental habits, thinking power, in the young. As one result, clear convictions in religion are lacking.

LESSON XIV.

PERSISTENCE.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Luke XVIII., Verses 1 to 9.

And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, and regarded not man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming. And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge His elect, which cry to Him day and night, and He is long-suffering over them? I say unto you, that He will avenge them speedily. Howbeit when the son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Work, for it is a noble thing,
With worthy ends in view,
To tread the path that God ordains
With steadfast hearts and true;
That will not quail, whate'er betide,
But bravely bear us through.
For in each weary, painful task
A lesson is inwrought,
If we would read the truth aright,
And let ourselves be taught
Patience and faith and fortitude
And fixedness of thought.

Anonymous.

I. A QUESTION.

What has the subject of "persistence," to do with a lesson on religion? To any one asking this question we can reply: Very much. Most important things depend on this trait of character. Without it we must fail in many ways to carry out the teachings of Jesus.

Our Bible passage shows what the Great Teacher thought about persistence. He told the story of the poor widow and the stern judge, — how the widow begged and prayed and would not be refused, until at last the evil judge did what was right to escape the importunities of this woman. If, then, says Jesus, a hard-hearted man will thus yield to the force of patient pleading, will not God, who is kind and loving, much quicker answer them who persistently seek what is good?

II. EXAMPLES.

We think at once of two great examples of persistence,—Columbus and Cyrus W. Field. The first sailed over the ocean to discover new countries: the other bound the countries together by telegraphic cables in the depths of the ocean. Both of them were opposed and well-nigh disheartened, but each persevered until victory was reached. They were laughed at, abused, misrepresented; but at no time did they quite lose heart. Read some short biography of each one, and see how their lives stir the noblest spirit in us.

The Christian missionaries are fine examples, and more directly in line with religion. Eliot to the Indians, Judson in India, Livingstone in Africa,—these and a host of others were famous because they were persistent. They never gave up. Nothing frightened them. If the early Christians had not been patient and persevering, the new religion would not have become known.

III. OTHER NAMES.

Charles Sumner gave this motto to a young man, "Stick." It was a striking way of defining persistence. Robert Collyer's most popular lecture is on "Clear Grit," which is another term for persist-

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ence. Michael Angelo said that the only kind of genius he knew was hard work. That means persistence. If, then, this trait is so valuable in life, it must be of great importance in Christian character; and so it is.

IV. WHAT IT STANDS FOR.

Suppose, in reading the beatitudes, you are impressed with the one that says, "Blessed are the meek," and you resolve to be more gentle and forbearing in your conduct. The task soon grows hard. If you are weak and foolish, you will give up, and let your feelings break out with no attempt at self-control. If you are strong and earnest, you will call in persistence to help; and gradually a habit will spring up, making it all easier.

Suppose you set up an aim, an object: nothing will finally give you success but persistency. Circumstances will not, friends will not, dreaming will not: no, nothing but perseverance ever made a saint or won a crown. Of course, perseverance does not do it all; but, that lacking, other helps are not sufficient.

Suppose you were to learn two things, one well, one poorly. Suppose that, by perseverance, this first accomplishment was familiar and easily performed, while the other was unfamiliar and difficult. Which would give the more pleasure to yourself and to others?

Persistence means will-power, or the ability to do and to carry out our plans.

It stands for loyalty, so that we are reliable and enthusiastic.

It increases our usefulness, because we are steadily moving in a given direction, and are not wasting our power.

It gives courage and help to others: the fickle, changeable person scatters irresolution around him.

Persistence shows faith in God: we believe that our efforts will be approved and blest by Him.

These are the benefits that come from "perseverance in well-doing." As for the woes that arise when we persist in wrong-doing, they are many and heavy. This great power can bring evil or good, as it is turned upward or downward. All the more should we, therefore, take heed and obey the upward call.

V CLASS TALKS.

Can you explain the Bible passage? What two great examples of our subject are mentioned in the lesson? How did Columbus show persistence? Why was he so hopeful? What did Cyrus Field do? Can you give any other examples? Do you remember the names of any missionaries? Were they persevering? How was it with the early Christians? What word did Sumner use? And Robert Collier? Can you mention some benefits conferred by persistence? Is there such a thing as persevering the wrong way? What is the "upward call"? Are you persevering or are you easily changed?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. Explain the Bible Passage.
- II. Persistence in Every-day Life.
- III. Persistence in Religious Characters.
- IV. Relation of Faith, Patience, and Hope.
- V. A Summing Up.

VII. TO TEACHERS.

One of the dangers to church and religion to-day is the lack of loyalty, lack of steadiness. This was touched in the lesson on Thoughtfulness, when the intellectual side was considered. Now we are looking at the spirit behind, and our object should be to enforce the necessity and worth of unbroken fidelity to any noble plan we undertake.

LESSON XV.

FORGIVENESS.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Matthew XVIII., Verses 23 to the end of chapter.

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

Though I speak with angel tongues
Bravest words of strength and fire,
They are but as idle songs,
If no love my heart inspire.
All the eloquence shall pass
As the noise of sounding brass.

Lange.

I. FORGIVING AND FORGETTING.

Sometimes you will hear a person say, I will forgive him for what he did to me, but I can never forget the wrong. Is that the right way? It seems to mean that there will always be a fire of resentment smouldering in the heart. Would it not be better to say, I will forgive, and I will do my best to forget. Then the remembrance will slowly grow dim and almost fade out of sight. It is true we cannot rub out by an act of the will a part of memory, but we can decrease its power until it has almost no life.

Our Bible passage teaches that, as God is ready to forgive, so ought we quickly and gladly to forgive those who do us injury.

II. OTHER REASONS.

But there are other reasons why this is right.

1. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you." That is, if we are harsh and severe in our judgments, we must expect the same treatment from people. We have faults, and need charity. It will not be given to us if we refuse it to others. A boy or girl who will not cheerfully "make up" after a quarrel is not likely to have many friends.

2. It shows a noble spirit to be brave enough to confess a wrong and seek reconciliation. A narrow soul loves hatred, which is darkness: a broad soul loves good will, and that is light. Sometimes we forgive, and sometimes we need to be forgiven. Pride is the enemy that stands in the way. It is manly to talk over troubles and settle them in a friendly way.

3. The forgiving spirit is the mark of the Christian. We are told that the Indian never forgives an injury, and never forgets a wrong done to him. He waits for an opportunity to get revenge, it may be for years; and then he springs on his unsuspecting victim. What hours and days of brooding the savage must have! How fierce his

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feelings and how wasted his thoughts! Jesus was full of the forgiving spirit. He pardoned his most cruel enemies, saying, They know not what they do. A beautiful example, following the spirit of Jesus, was Samuel G. May, who was persecuted for his opinions. At public occasions his enemies would try to break up the meetings, making noise, and throwing missiles. Mr. May, with smiling face, often asked them to come to the platform and speak, reaching out his hand of welcome. This treatment was like oil on angry waters. The higher we go in civilization, the more of the spirit of kindness and forbearance shall we find.

4. The strong character is the forgiving one. If a person is weak, and afraid to trust himself on his merits, he is apt to be severe, resentful, and uncharitable. If we are conscious of being in the right, we need not scold or act harshly. Our cause will show for itself. The just man loves the daylight. Abraham Lincoln was a noble example of this. It was said of him, "His heart was as great as the world, but there was no room in it to hold the memory of a wrong." Yet Lincoln was firm as a rock in the performance of duty.

III. How FAR?

Jesus said, Forgive seventy times seven times. What did he mean? Our next subject is Justice; and how can justice be dealt out if we forgive everything wrong? We must always use good sense. The criminal must abide by the laws. Some deeds require punishment, for the good of the offender and for the security of society. Jesus wanted us to put away resentment and anger. The judges do not sentence criminals in any spirit of bitterness. They pity the prisoner, no doubt, but carry out the law.

IV. OUR DUTY.

Our duty is this: to try to escape censoriousness, resentment, and pride; to cultivate charity, forbearance, and love. You know what Paul said: Think not too highly of yourself, and so indulge conceit; for then we create the unforgiving spirit, and every little word or act may be misunderstood. Avoid suspicion, and trust your friends.

V. CLASS TALKS.

What is heart forgiveness? What is mere word forgiveness? How do you explain the passage from Scripture? Can you forgive and forget? In what way do we make a rankling memory lose its power? Did Jesus show the forgiving spirit in a complete way? Who was Samuel J. May? Can you mention any incident in Lincoln's life illustrating this trait? What are some of the reasons for cultivating this spirit? Are there any limits to it? How do judges in courts of justice act?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. The Goodness of God as a Reason.
- II. Our own Need of Charity.
- III. Illustrations from Great Examples.
- IV. Place in the Development of Man.
- V. Consideration of Limits and Guards.

VII. TO TEACHERS.

See Spaulding's "Reconciliation and Forbearance" and "Forgiveness of Injuries," in his lessons on the Teachings of Jesus.

LESSON XVI.

JUSTICE.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Isaiah XXVI., Verses 2 to 9.

Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is an everlasting rock. For He hath brought down them that dwell on high, the lofty city: He layeth it low, He layeth it low even to the ground: He bringeth it even to the dust. The foot shall tread it down; even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy. The way of the just is uprightness: Thou that art upright dost direct the path of the just. Yea, in the way of Thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for Thee; to Thy name and to Thy memorial is the desire of our soul. With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early: for when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

Happy the man who dares be just,
Refusing to betray his trust,
Though interest tempt him to the deed,
Though the ensnaring passions plead.
Happy the man who dares be just,
Steadfast when duty says, "Thou must,"
Against the tyrant's marking frown
Or fickle crowd impetuous grown.

W. Taylor.

I. SCHOOL AND FRIENDS.

If we want to be kind, we must first be just. We can do harm by thoughtless affection. The best and truest friend is one who uses good judgment toward us. He is not the best friend who agrees with all we say or yields to every plan we make. You grow to dislike such an echo of yourself.

Then justice is what we want in play or school life. Justice is fairness. In games we say, Play fair. Any one who cheats is scorned.

If we are just, we measure other boys and girls in a generous spirit, giving them credit for what is good in them. Teachers often say of some pupil, He does not do himself justice. They mean that he is not able to show what he really is. Then his mates ought to help him and encourage him.

II. HIGHER FORMS.

So you see that this subject of justice comes home, and has illustrations in the playground, home, and school.

But, if we look out over the world, we see that justice is the one great need to make people live happier together. It is not money or power or glory that is needed so much as justice to make people happy. Laws are made and books are filled with them, courts and jails and police forces are multiplied, to maintain justice. We are not safe unless all this is done for protection. Everybody is crying out for justice. Each one thinks he is wronged some time in some way.

Armies fight each other and nations go to war for justice. Great revolutions break out with fire and sword for justice. All this seems strange. What does the Bible say about it?

III. RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Our Bible passage gives us the answer. When the people have the laws of God in their hearts, then they will be righteous; and to be righteous is to be just. Jesus taught us saying, Obey conscience, respect others, keep the commandments, and the justice of the Most High shall become the habit of the people.

JUSTICE.

But all this comes slowly, and the end is far away. How can we be just and how can we help others to justice? This cause needs your help. Young people ought to enlist in the ranks of those who are striving to bring the day of even-handed justice.

IV. How.

1. By keeping our minds open to the truth. Always be on the search for light as long as you live. Do not think you know the whole: learn from those who differ.

2. By bravely holding to the right as you see it. Did you ever hear of Aristides, the old Greek? He was called the Just, because of his fearless support of the best men and the best things. So the people banished him. But his name is honored. It is not enough to think justly: you must stand up fearlessly for the side that is wrongly treated.

3. By respecting the rights of others, however lowly. You should not be satisfied with coldly granting what is asked, but gladly help others to what they are entitled, even if they do not demand their share. A just man does not wait to be compelled to do what is right: he acts from his own sense of justice. Some persons are honest and fair, so far as they are watched: the nobler kind are true and just under all circumstances.

V. JUSTICE AND MERCY.

Scripture says that the highest goodness is when justice and mercy go together. But justice must come first. You can give alms to a beggar, and thereby do him harm and harm others. You must examine and act wisely; that is, justly. Some men are just, but very stern and cold. Others are very tender, but careless and weak in character. Let us be neither. Justice and tenderness, fairness and sympathy, righteousness and love,—let them dwell together in the same house of character, the House Beautiful.

What are the causes of injustice? Knowing them, let us always be on our guard against their hurtful influence.

There is thoughtlessness: unfair dealing often springs from the careless way we consider other people.

Jealousy, or the spirit of envy, is another source. We must rejoice in the success and talents of others.

Temper, or the impulse of the moment, is often the cause of unjust words and deeds.

Pride, or foolish ideas as to our position and importance, can injure us. Let our spirit be modest and manly, with appreciation for all.

VI. CLASS TALKS.

Is justice the test in school life? How? Is a teacher liked who has favorites? Do we like a boy who is not fair? If we follow our impulses, are we just? What is good judgment? Can people live in cities and towns without justice? Do wars arise over this question? Is slavery just? Is it just to take advantage of ignorant people or weak ones? What does the Bible say? What are "the laws of God"? If every one tried to do right, would there be any injustice? Do good people sometimes differ as to what injustice is? How can we do something to make justice stronger in the world? What about justice and mercy?

VII. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. Isaiah's Picture of the Coming Day.
- II. School and Home Justice.
- III. Fairness and Respect.
- IV. The Place of Justice in Laws and Society.
- V. What We can Do.

LESSON XVII.

MANLINESS.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Ephesians VI., Verses 10 to 17.

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breast-plate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

How happy is he born or taught
Who serveth not another's will;
Whose armor is his honest thought,
And simple truth his highest skill.

Sir Henry Wotton.

I. ALL-ROUNDNESS.

Manliness is not one thing: it is made of several traits. So our lesson this time might be called,—The art of putting together.

You will notice in the Bible passage that Paul urges his readers to “put on” and “put together” several things. “And, having done all, to stand.”

Now “to stand” means to be courageous. But we cannot be bold, safely, until we have made ready. Many of our lessons, so far, have told us what is needed to make men truly manly and women truly womanly. For, when we speak of “manliness,” we mean a spirit that is equally good for young men and young women, for boys and girls.

II. WHAT AND HOW.

Many years ago a boy grew up in England, and worked hard to get his living. He helped in a blacksmith shop. Afterward he came to America, became a preacher, and then sent back for the anvil on which he worked with his hammer in the blacksmith's shop. That man still lives. His name is Robert Collyer,—a very manly man, as well as an eloquent preacher. That anvil is in the study of a church in Chicago, where Mr. Collyer was minister many years.

He preached a sermon to children and young people. It was printed, and you can find it in a volume called “The Life that Now Is.” I wish I could give the whole of the sermon here: ask your teacher to get it, and read it to you. It runs like a story. What do you suppose Mr. Collyer took for his subject? This, “Tender, Trusty, and True”; and by that he meant “manliness.” In one place, after telling what Dr. Channing did with a bird's nest (that was tenderness), and at another time with a bad, rude boy (that was true boldness), he says, “Tender and true, boys, tender and true. King David, King Alfred, George Washington, William Channing, Theodore Parker, more great men than I can name, were all that sort; and they came out right because they went in right. Brave as lions, true as steel, with kind hearts for doves and ravens, they would never tear birds' nests, or sling stones trying to kill birds, because they felt as Jesus did when he said, ‘Blessed are the merciful.’”

MANLINESS.

III. MISTAKES.

We often make mistakes about manliness, and we need to be careful.

Often we think that the manly spirit shows itself in pushing and making ourselves seen and heard. This is wrong. Sometimes the bravest soul is the most modest. There is a time to step forward and a time to remain quiet. A very silent, still person may prove the leader we want in times of trouble.

Then, if a person has feelings of compassion, and acts in a gentle, pitying way, we may wrongly call him weak. Manliness requires just that noble quality of sympathy. A prize-fighter is not manly, he is strong and brutal. I sometimes think the huge elephant is a picture of what we are talking about: he can pick up a straw with his trunk, and he can also twist and pull down a tree. But elephants are only pictures to us: they cannot think and feel as we do.

I have heard young people say that it was unmanly to acknowledge a mistake or to beg pardon. A sad error. He who is sure of himself need never fear to say, "I was in the wrong," if he was. It is the crown of manliness to be just and fair, and to act in a fine, friendly fashion toward even an enemy.

IV. TENDER, TRUSTY, AND TRUE.

I think Mr. Collyer's motto is so good, I will use it at the end of this lesson. It is a pithy, pleasant way of expressing what we mean by the manly and womanly character. It means Gentleness and Strength, Mercy and Justice, Sympathy and Sincerity, each bound to each, and all made together in an every-day character of high thoughts and noble deeds.

Jesus teaches us to be manly by thinking of our origin and of our destiny. We are children of God, and, "if children, then heirs."

"Let each one think himself an act of God,
His mind a thought, his life a breath of God."

So said a poet. But all through the Gospels the Great Teacher bids us remember what we ought to be in the great family where God is our Heavenly Father and Jesus our Elder Brother.

V. CLASS TALKS.

Why did Paul use so many figures of speech about soldiers? Was he a prisoner among soldiers at any time? Can you repeat the lines from Sir Henry Wotton? Is manliness made of one trait of character? How would you define the manly man and the womanly woman? What do we mean by "all-roundness"? Can you think of any friend who seems to you very manly? Who is Robert Collyer? Where was he born, and what did he do? What particular sermon did he once preach? Can you repeat his motto? Do you think it a good one? If we are "tender and true," will we be trusted? What are some of the mistakes we make?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. Explain the Bible Passage.
- II. Tell the story briefly of Collyer's Life.
- III. Apply the motto "Tender, Trusty, and True."
- IV. Refer to the common mistakes.
- V. Picture the manliness of Christian Character.

VI. TO TEACHERS.

By all means, make good use of the sermon by Collyer. Turn, also, to Thomas Hughes' volume, "The Manliness of Christ." Many other sources exist, such as Mrs. Kate Gannett Wells' "Corner-Stones of Character," Marden's "Character is Power," in "Pushing to the Front," and a tract, "The Strong Man," by J. F. W. Ware.

LESSON XVIII.

HUMILITY.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Luke XIV., Verses 7 to 12.

And he spake a parable unto those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee. For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The bird that soars on highest wing
Builds on the ground her lowly nest;
And she that doth most sweetly sing
Sings in the shade, where all things rest.
In lark and nightingale we see
What honor hath humility.

James Montgomery.

I. GREAT NAMES.

Humility is not the way we appear: it is the way we are in our hearts. Humility is not something we put on the face and wear in our behavior: it is what we think and how we act. A man may bow very low, and seem to be humble, and his face may wear a look of extreme modesty; yet his heart may be hard, and his mind be full of pride.

A great man was near the end of his life: he had become known in the world as a genius; yet, after all his famous experience, he said, "I seem like a child who has played on the shore of the sea, finding here and there a few shells: beyond lies the vast unexplored ocean." That man was Sir Isaac Newton. There lived recently in our own country another great man, Prof. Louis Agassiz, honored everywhere for his learning; yet he once said: "I began to lecture years ago. It did not take long for me to tell all I knew. Ever since I have been repeating what I first said."

These are examples of humility. "The most ignorant are the most conceited," the wisest are the humblest.

II. THE PARABLE.

Jesus tells us in the Bible Passage how much better it is to be modest, and be promoted on our own merits, than to claim a great deal, and be told to go down lower in the class. It is quite reasonable to expect that merit will be recognized at last and receive its reward. We are not sure of this in every case, but this is the rule. The proud are cast down, and the humble are often exalted.

III. ANOTHER SAYING OF JESUS.

In the Beatitudes we read, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." This does not seem possible. How can it be explained?

Sir Isaac Newton was a leader in science because he was meek. That is, he was willing to learn. The disciples of Jesus became strong because they were willing to learn of this Great Teacher.

In the process of storage power by electricity there must first be the "charging," or receiving: then there is power on hand to run a car or a wagon. So in life we first obey and learn and get power, and then we are able to do something.

HUMILITY.

Young people do not always see this law of life, that never ceases. It is found everywhere. Meekness does not mean tameness or weakness or lack of courage. It means obedience, right estimate of ourselves, justice to others.

What did Jesus mean when he said that the meek are likely to inherit the earth?

IV. THE KEY.

Some one has made a clear distinction between humiliation and humility. We can be mortified, made ashamed; and that is humiliation. That experience gives a sense of disgrace. But, when we are humble in feelings before the grand deeds of others, that is simply giving credit to others. Out of that feeling may come a desire to do something like the example we honor.

The secret of Jesus is here: those who humbly obey what is true and good become masters of the art of being and acting the true and good. It is the same in science and business and society and religion.

Jesus wished us to realize that no one possesses anything unless he understands it and appreciates it. Meekly learn, and then victoriously command: that is the rule.

Is it a lesson at the day school? He who is humble and studies hard is the one who "has" the lesson. Is it a trade? He who patiently serves as apprentice is the one who "inherits" the skill.

There was a great artist in Rome, to whose studio many visitors came. Of course, friends praised and visitors complimented his work. But he was in the habit of saying to his best friends, "Yes! yes! I thank you: it is very kind; but do you see any progress in my work since you were here last?" That is the humble spirit, ever eager to do better.

V. THE RELIGIOUS SIDE.

Humility teaches us to forget ourselves frequently, and to help others. "I came to minister, not to be ministered unto," said Jesus. Humility banishes pride and restrains the bitter word. Humility leads us to remember how great and good God is, the Supreme Source of all life, and also to think of our weakness and needs before Him. From Him we came, to Him we return.

VI. CLASS TALKS.

What was the custom in Palestine in regard to feasts? Would the same rule be good now? Who was Sir Isaac Newton? What did he do to make himself famous? Who was Louis Agassiz? What did he say about himself? How do you explain the beatitude of the meek? Does humility mean being cowardly or tame? Can we possess anything if we do not understand and appreciate it? What is the difference between humiliation and humility? Is pride a poor friend?

VII. CLASS TALKS.

- I. Enlarge the picture of the Bible Parable.
- II. Lives of Newton, Agassiz, and similar characters.
- III. Humiliation and Humility.
- IV. Relation of Obedience to Power.
- V. Humility as a Religious Trait.

LESSON XIX.

IMAGINATION.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Revelation XXI., Verses 1 to 8.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God; and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. And He that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said, Write: for these words are faithful and true. And He said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be His God, and he shall be My son.

I slept, and dreamed that Life was Beauty:
I woke, and found that Life was Duty.
Was my dream, then, a shadowy lie?
Toil on, brave heart, courageously;
And thou shalt find thy dream to be
A noon-day light and truth to thee.

I. RELIGION AND IMAGINATION.

Many times in these lessons the teacher may have stopped and asked, What has this subject to do with religion? But I hope the relation was clearly shown before the lesson ended. So, in this instance, it might seem at first that imagination is a subject outside our Sunday teaching. Not so. A topic closer bound with Christian faith and character you could hardly find.

The Bible Passage is a witness. See how the writer pictures the glories to come. Turn to the parables of Jesus, the gem parts of his preaching: they are fruits of imagination. Faith and Hope use imagination. It is a great power. We must learn to use it wisely.

II. A DREAM.

Our selected poetry in this lesson teaches a beautiful truth. We dream, in our daily thoughts, of what we would like to see come to pass. That "pattern" must not be lost. It will shine before us in the battle of life. Young people dream dreams and old people have visions, and the world is the better.

But let us distinguish between imagination and fancy. There is quite a difference. If we think out wild and improbable things, that is fancy. We cannot live by them: they are bubbles on the stream. But, if we think out grand things in a serious, unselfish way, then we have something that is priceless.

III. LOWELL.

Some day I hope you will all know who James Russell Lowell was, and what he wrote. He not only used his imagination in writing poetry, but he wrote in prose also; and in both ways he showed a trained imagination. He was able to throw his thought into struggles of right and wrong, and in his mind he saw the right victorious and the wrong defeated. He sung the song of the dandelion, and he also struck the chord of freedom for all. What a wonderful gift,—to be able to do all this!

But we all have this gift in some degree. It is God's gift. Little children "make believe" and "play" at many games alone, imagin-

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ing this is one person and that another. The truth is, we could do almost nothing without this faculty. Memory is kept alive by imagination; and, when we cease to remember, we are not of any use.

IV. IN CHARACTER.

So numerous are the uses of imagination, it would take many lessons to tell the story. Let us confine ourselves to a few points.

1. This power is given us to help us do good. When we truly sympathize with any one, we "put ourselves in his place." Suppose a boy asks you to listen to his account of some trouble. You only half listen: you are not interested. He goes away hurt. On the other hand, if you imagine everything, just as he tells it, you are anxious to help him, because you are stirred.

2. We all carry photographs,—not real ones, but pictures in our imaginations. They are constantly coming before us. They may be noble and beautiful: they may be unworthy and harmful. This picture gallery has great effect upon us. We ought to carry in our imagination "whatsoever is lovely, of good report," and that which will elevate and uplift.

3. If we develop our imagination well, then we can enjoy books and good stories and fine poetry. The best listener to a sermon is the one who catches the thought of the preacher quickly. He imagines at once what the idea is. No one can enjoy walking in the woods or rambling on the seashore or climbing mountains, who is without imagination. Some persons travel over the world, but they never bring back much in their minds. They simply saw so many cities, churches, rivers, and people.

4. Through this door comes the love of the Beautiful. Each little child has this love, of a flower, a star, a sunset. The civilized man is fond of having a beautiful home. The savage does not care for it. This fondness helps to make our characters beautiful.

5. I suppose we could not properly worship God and show our gratitude to Him if this wonderful power did not belong to us. We think of Him as perfect Beauty and perfect Goodness, but we think of Him in symbols and pictures and sentiments. All these, as your teacher should explain, are the blessings of imagination. We do not know that an animal can worship his Creator.

V. CLASS TALKS.

What would you call the book of Revelation? Is it full of visions? What does the passage of poetry teach? Are there different kinds of dreams? What is fancy? Who was James Russell Lowell? Did he write poetry about flowers? On what other subjects did he write? Was his fame made by a rare use of imagination? What do we mean by "put yourself in his place"? Does each one of us own a picture gallery? Ought we to hang lovely pictures in it? In what way can we best enjoy books, travels, and landscapes? How can we cultivate a love of the Beautiful and worship God?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. Imagination in the Bible.
- II. Its place in science, teaching, etc.
- III. Love of Ideal Beauty and Goodness.
- IV. Effect on Character.
- V. Helps, Guards, Improvement.

VII. TO TEACHERS.

In "Self-culture," by James Freeman Clarke, is a fine chapter on "Imagination." We commend this book as a whole to teachers. It will prove helpful in many ways. Robert Collyer's sermons in "Nature and Life" are full of illustrative material, showing the religious uses of the imagination. Some are "Root and Flower," "What a Leaf said," "The Treasures of the Snow."

LESSON XX.

HOPEFULNESS.

BIBLE PASSAGE.

Isaiah, Chapter LV., Verses 6 to end of chapter.

Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go forth with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

A nameless man, amid a crowd that thronged the daily mart,
Let fall a word of Hope and Love, unstudied, from the heart;
A whisper on the tumult thrown,—a transitory breath,—
It raised a brother from the dust, it saved a soul from death.
O germ! O fount! O word of love! O thought at random cast!
Ye were but little at the first, but mighty at the last.

Charles Mackay.

I. MOSES.

In the Old Testament we find the history of a man called Moses. The story tells us that he led the Hebrews out of Egypt, and spent many years in a hard struggle to keep his people together and to induce them to obey God. He was a great leader. But hopefulness was his strong helper: he never gave up. "The Promised Land" seemed real and near to his hoping heart.

II. DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

A poor boy grew up in a city of England. He worked at the loom in a factory. So great was his love for books, and so desirous was he to get an education, he would put a book on the loom during his labors and study. This boy became the Christian missionary, David Livingstone, who explored Africa. He went through many dangers and suffered much, but hopefulness kept him up to the end.

III. WHAT IS IT?

1. The boy with the hopeful spirit is always the cheerful person. He does not complain about little troubles. His heart and face are full of sunshine. This is not only good for the boy's courage: it is good for every one he meets.

2. Hopefulness teaches us to turn to the thankful side of life. I mean we are grateful for what we have, and make the most of it. Instead of saying, "I wish it were more or better," and feeling hurt, we say: "This is very good, more than I deserve perhaps. I will do the best I can."

3. If we are hopeful, we are likely to receive all the good will and friendship that any one can expect. The discouraged person shuts himself away from others. The spirit of hopefulness throws up the curtains, so to say; and every ray of sunshine that may be shining can get in.

4. Jesus taught hopefulness. It is a leading Christian virtue. The great prophet, Isaiah, whose words we have placed at the beginning of the lesson, was full of hope. He foretold the glorious coming

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of the kingdom of God. No one is a true Christian who doubts too much or is a slave to fear and discouragement. He who believes in God and His love will be hopeful ever.

5. And so, as the poem by Mackay runs, if we are hopeful, we believe in the value of little things. We do not wait for some grander place to do noble deeds. Here and now we can be noble and great. Hopefulness believes in seeds, in beginnings, in humble efforts, in daily fidelity.

IV. HOLD FAST.

Young people are naturally hopeful. Why, then, do I take hopefulness for the last, crowning subject in our lessons on character-building? Because young people grow older rapidly; and, as they mature, there is danger that they will lose that happy spirit. If they do, then nearly all is lost. "We are saved by hope," says Scripture. The sun goes down when hope ceases. What we learn in youth of noble example and beautiful ideals must be kept with loyalty. Do not allow any scoffer to take away your faith in the best. Do not allow any unfortunate experience to destroy your confidence in honor and Christianity. Always remain hopeful, and expect the fruits of kindness.

The hopeful heart is full of enthusiasm, and without enthusiasm we cannot do any great thing. Turn to all the loftiest examples the world has known, they shine with the victorious light of hope. A wise man has said:—

"Where there is no hope, there can be no endeavor."

What better word can we place on the top arch of our building than Hopefulness? We have inscribed Sincerity, Fidelity, Unselfishness, Justice, and many other great traits; but, to make them all successful, we must animate them by Hopefulness. Because God asks it and man needs it, we can do it.

Let us always be hopeful about our fellow-men, hopeful as to our own possibilities, hopeful about the future life.

V. CLASS TALKS.

Can you mention any incident in the life of Moses? What gave him his courage and hope? Who was David Livingstone? How did he contrive to study while at work? What country did he explore? Can any one be cheerful without hope? Do you like to meet discouraged people? Are some persons naturally more cheerful than others? Why do we call the gospel of Jesus a religion of hope? Is there any danger of losing this spirit as we grow older? Why have we put this subject at the end of our lessons? Would a man begin to build a house if he had no hope of finishing it? How about building character?

VI. TOPICS AND REVIEW.

- I. Hope the source of Prophecy.
- II. The place in daily life of Hopefulness.
- III. How it ranks in Christianity.
- IV. Great Examples.
- V. Guards and Cultivation.

VII. TO TEACHERS.

See "Self-culture," by James Freeman Clarke, chapter on "Education of Hope." Young people have their disheartening experiences, as serious to them as the rebuffs of maturer life. The crown of character is a reasonable optimism. Begin the creation of this liberal spirit early.

To get the best results from this course of lessons, teachers should have a careful, thorough review. Give to the pupils written questions like the following:—

1. What subject of all was to you the most attractive? 2. Which was the most important? 3. In what order of value would you arrange the subjects? 4. What character in history interested you most? 5. Why? 6. What character from the Bible? 7. Why? etc. In this way gather up some conclusions.

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